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Standard Systems Group transforms to support warfighter

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SSG Public Affairs

MAXWELL AFB, GUNTER ANNEX, Ala -- "The goal is not to transform the military in one year or even one decade," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told Congress in August, 2002. "Rather, we aim to transform between 5 and 10 percent of the force, turning it into the leading edge of change that will . . . continue to lead the rest of the force into the 21st century."

The Standard Systems Group has joined in the military's effort to transform. "We're transitioning our organization and processes to better support the warfighter and system program managers," Frank Weber, SSG executive director, said.

SSG's mission remains unchanged – to provide and support secure combat support information systems and networks for the Air Force and DoD components. Today, SSG systems are used at virtually every Air Force operating base – both in garrison and deployed – with more than 200,000 users and 3 million transactions daily. Their vision is to be the recognized Information Technology Center of Excellence for the Warfighter.

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To reach that goal, SSG will be streamlining both its organization and how it conducts its business. Weber said that he wanted to sharpen the organization's focus on its worldwide customers to better leverage its information technology and acquisition skills, reducing overall costs to the customer.

New directorates will stand up, while others will merge. "These critical changes will optimize how we work with customers and users," Weber said. "We want to ensure that we have the right skills in the right places at the right time to put capability into our customers' hands."

A directorate that was recently established is the Engineering and Architecture Directorate. "Their primary mission is to ensure a disciplined engineering approach to systems deployment," Weber said. The directorate serves as SSG's focal point for systems integration and interoperability, and will also handle productivity improvements related to the Systems Engineering Process.

The new Operations Directorate will merge most of the present Defense Information Infrastructure, Network Communications and the Customer Support Divisions. It will provide enterprise services that leverage the common infrastructure, and will provide 24x7 operational support for Air Force customers.

The new Acquisition Directorate combines the Commercial Information Technology-Product Information Directorate (CIT-PAD) with the Contracting Office. Their charter will be to provide acquisition strategy and contracting support to program managers and the staff. The directorate will also purchase IT hardware, software and services for the Air Force.

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SSG's Personnel, Manpower and Training Directorate (DP) will focus on both military and civilian personnel matters, skills for the ever-changing IT environment, and will consolidate training requirements for the group. The DP will also serve as the Civilian Personnel Flight liaison.

The Software Technology Services Directorate (ST) will serve as SSG's Air Force portal focal point, and focus primarily on lifecycle maintenance and sustainment of air combat support systems. The directorate will comprise SSG's Central Design Activity.

"As we change the way we operate, we'll also rebalance our military, civilian and contractor mix," Weber said. "Our goal is a 25-30 percent cost reduction over the next two years without sacrificing mission or quality.

"Because transformation is a never-ending journey of change in a changing world, we can never say, "Okay, we're done. We've transformed ourselves," Weber said. "But our transformed SSG team will give our customers confidence that their missions will be supported without interruption.

"SSG has a bright future and we are determined to be the Air Force's preeminent information technology acquisition, engineering and sustainment activity of the future."

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